

K-27

The Buck-Chambers House
Queen Street, Chestertown
c. 1735, 1786

Lot No. 34 in Chestertown contains two of the earliest surviving houses in the town, both built in the mid-1730's for an absentee owner. When Jonathan Page, mariner, sold the northwest half of lot 34 in 1735, the deed stated that it "... is now marked out for building ... opposite a dwelling house lately built by one James Moore (bricklayer) ... "¹ (Moore's house was probably located on the north corner of High and Queen Streets). John Buck, Esquire, of Bideford, Devonshire, Great Brittain, soon improved his lot with the construction of not one, but two houses, built of a combination of brick and stone. The larger building is located on the High Street end of the lot while the other is constructed at the opposite end, facing Queen Street. The former is discussed under the name of Buck-Bacchus Store and the latter is the subject of this study.

The Buck family was one of the most prosperous merchant families of Bideford in the late 17th and 18th centuries. Besides a large estate at home, they owned properties in Maryland, Virginia and Maine. A hatchment bearing the family Coat of Arms remains in the church of St. Mary's, Bideford to this day. Even though Bideford was their home, the names of John and his sons, William and George, appear frequently in the county court records of the second and third quarter of the 18th century. Most of those entries involve collecting debts from numerous clients.²

The smaller of the two houses built on lot No. 34 was constructed without a basement under the main section, and consequently closer to

grade. Its two story facade was laid in Flemish bond brick with glazed headers on a stone foundation. The side walls were built of stone up to the second floor level, then brick to the roof. It had a unique four bay facade with entry in the second bay from the northeast end. The two central bays had segmental arches while the two end bays had Jack arches. The second story had only three bays, symmetrically arranged above the four below. The steeply pitched roof was probably without dormers when first constructed, the attic rooms being lighted by gable windows.

The floor plan consisted of hall and parlor with a kitchen off the rear. In the hall was a winder stair to the second story located east of the fireplace. Separating the two rooms was a board wall with double beaded seams, a feature which it has in common with the Buck-Bacchus Store. Originally there was no stair in the parlor, but only a fireplace. The second story was divided into a stair hall with two large rooms facing the street and a smaller room at the end of the hall lighted by a window in the southwest gable.

After the death of John Buck in 1745, his sons William and George inherited the Chestertown property, which they held until 1771. "On the same Lot is a large Brick House, which, with a little Expence, might be converted into a good Store-Room and Compting-House. For Terms of Sale, apply to Joseph Earle."³ In their deed, the fact that there were two houses was again confirmed by the statement: "all and singular their two brick messuages or tenements and Lott ... late in the possession of Dr. John Scott and now in the possession of the said Emory Sudler ... "⁴

Emory Sudler owned the property between 1771-1785 and is known to have been a successful merchant. At one time he was in partnership with Thomas Smyth under the name of "Smyth & Sudler." Emory Sudler was married to Martha, Smyth's half sister.⁵ Sudler acquired part of lot No. 25 adjoining lot No. 34 on the northeast. He sold his entire holdings on Queen Street in 1785 for the large sum of @2998.6 to Smyth⁶, after which he removed to Radcliffe Cross.

Within a month of the purchase, Thomas Smyth advertised the property for sale in the Maryland Gazette. He divided it into two separate parcels, one being the corner and "the other lot is 92 feet in front of Queen St., running back 180 feet, has on the said Street a brick House, two stories high, 2 rooms in the lower and three in the upper, with a good framed kitchen, under which is a good dry cellar. There are also on the premises a carriage house and stable ..."⁷

The advertisement for the house in 1785 clearly corresponds to part of the existing building, even though it states simply that it is a brick house, when in fact the first story walls of all but the facade were stone. The "dry basement" in the rear, which had to be built at the same time as the front, since there is a common wall, presents questions about the form of the "framed kitchen." Possibly it was a very long "lean-to with shed roof having a chimney at one or both ends. Whatever its form, it was not to last long.

In 1786 Smyth sold one quarter of Lot No. 34 and part of Lot No. 25 to Benjamin Chambers, attorney and one time Clerk of the Court.⁸ Chambers paid @650 for the house and property but soon began to enlarge

his new home. First he pulled down the frame kitchen and built a two story brick structure on the existing basement, nearly doubling the size of the front section. Its floor plan appears to have been two rooms with central passage leading to a new frame kitchen. The second story had two rooms without passage. The 'third room', mentioned in the advertisement was turned into part of the corridor for access to the new south bedroom, which created a four room plan with corridor between. In form and plan it was similar to 201 Water Street, the house built by William Smith and enlarged by William Ringgold on the corner of Maple Avenue and Water Street.

Chambers retained the original interior board partitions with double beaded joint. In the new wing the first floor window jambs were plastered, like the existing house, but the second floor window trim appears to have been designed for interior shutters. Fireplace design was more up-to-date with paneled overmantel and cabinet adjoining in the east room. A simple dentil-molded mantel and corresponding dentil cornice were installed in the west room.

Benjamin Chambers resided in this house until he and his wife Elizabeth (Forman) were able to purchase Widehall from Robert Wright in 1810. The following year they deeded part of their home property to their daughter Augusta, wife of Judge James Houston.⁹ The same year, 1811, the other portion of their lot, with house they had built for son, Ezekiel, was deeded to him.

Augusta and James Houston lived at 113 Queen Street, three doors away, and at Airy Hill after 1814. During Augusta's ownership 103 Queen Street was rented. After Judge Houston's death, Airy Hill was sold, but not the Queen Street houses.

Before her death in 1833, Augusta Houston had married John Bowers, probably brother-in-law to her brother Ezekiel. They raised the two Houston girls, but had no children of their own. In her estate, executed by her brother-in-law John Bowers Eccleston, one of the accounts receivable states "balance of rent due by Joseph Redue (one of the appraisers of the estate) to the deceased for her house in Queen Street for 1831 ...".¹⁰ This entry confirms that the house was rented after General and Mrs. Chambers moved to Widehall.

By the time of the Tax Assessment of 1841, the property is listed belonging to Elizabeth F. Patton, Augusta and James Houston's second daughter, who had married Thomas Patton of Philadelphia. The house was assessed for \$1,200, is in good repair and is occupied by Reverend William Kesley."¹¹ After her husband's death, Elizabeth Patton moved from Philadelphia to Baltimore and in 1862 she transferred the Queen Street property to her nephew James Houston Eccleston, son of her sister Augusta.¹²

In 1868 Eccleston transferred the house to William Vannort,¹³ a well-to-do landowner and businessman of Chestertown. He resided on Water Street, so the house continued to be rented. The house remained in the Vannort and related Simpers family until it was sold to John and Anna Allspach in 1957.¹⁴

During this long period of ownership, the Vannorts had a frame house built between the two brick Chambers Houses which incorporated

an early brick smoke house that had belonged to the Chambers.

In 1914 the Chambers house was divided into two apartments. Its facade was altered by placing entrances in the two end bays and making a window out of the original entrance. It was divided by existing partitions. A new stair was installed in the south corner of the southwest room, mirroring the placement of the original stair. In 1942 the old frame kitchen in the back was torn down and a new two story frame kitchen was built on old foundations. It housed double kitchens and baths.

In 1963 the duplex was purchased by Norman and Alice James and subsequently re-converted back to a single family residence.¹⁵ It was the first time since the Chambers occupancy that the house was occupied by its owners.

1. Land Records, Lib. 4, fol. 542.
2. Civil Docket, 1728-39 (c. 1037-1).
3. Maryland Gazette, 1 Dec. 1768.
4. Land Records, Lib. DD3, fol. 513.
5. Papenfuss, E., Biographical Dictionary of Maryland Legislature.
6. Land Records, Lib. EF 6, fol. 487.
7. Maryland Gazette, 26 Aug. 1785.
8. Land Records, Lib. EF 7, fol. 77.
9. Land Records, Lib. BC 7, fol. 49.
10. Accounts, Lib. 15, fol. 373.
11. Kent County Tax Assessment for 1841, Chestertown.
12. Land Records, Lib. JKH 3, fol. 161.
13. Land Records, Lib. JKH 7, fol. 341.

14. Land Records, Lib. WHG 62, fol. 447.
15. Land Records, Lib. EHP 1, fol. 312.

16-27 John Buck House
Chestertown
private

c. 1735

The John Buck House is one of two brick Georgian "^{original}~~original~~ cat-slide" or leanto houses in Chestertown; its mate, the Anderson House (400-402 Cannon St.) maintains a symmetrical gable roof by changing the pitch of the slide. The Buck House sacrifices the symmetry of the gable to maintain a constant pitch from peak to the rear of the slide.

The house has been through several seiges of alteration but has been brought back to approximately its original form ~~by~~ by the present owners. The house was built for John Buck, an Englishman, ~~probably in the 1730's~~ most likely soon after he bought the ~~th~~ property in 1735.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

John Buck House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

103 Queen Street

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Kent

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☒ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Norman and Alice James

Telephone #: 778 3660

STREET & NUMBER

103 Queen Street

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21620

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk

Liber #: EHP 1

Folio #: 312

STREET & NUMBER

Kent County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

STATE

Md.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Plot affixed to deed (J.R. MacCrone)

DATE

January 5, 1963

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

same as deed

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

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CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED though largely restored	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

103 Queen Street is located on the southeast side of Queen Street between Church and High Streets in Chestertown. It is set very close to the sidewalk and to its neighbors on either side, on a part of Town Lot 34.

The house has been through several stages of alteration but appears to be back in close to its original form. It is a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -story brick Georgian house, 4 bays wide on the first story and 3 wide on the second, with two gabled dormers. The front roof is a short steep "A" and the rear is a long 2-story catslide. The brickwork is laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers, which are virtually invisible now because of the red paint which was at some stage put over the entire facade. There is a belt course between the first and second stories.

The entrance is in the second bay from the northeast (left) end of the house. The door has six panels and a 4-pane transom; it is framed by full-length shutters. All of the windows on the facade have louvered shutters and are 6/6 double hung sash. Originally, all of the first story windows and door had segmental brick arches; during the latest renovation, two of the first story windows, in being transformed back from doors into windows, were given flat arches. The second story windows have plain wood lintels. Both first and second story windows have wood sills.

A stepped white fascia board has been added below the plain box cornice; it extends down about a foot, partially covering the second story window's lintels. The roof is of composition shingles. There are stucco covered chimneys inside the gable ends at the peak of the roof and brick chimneys inside the rear section, about half-way back on the catslide.

There is an assortment of smaller windows on the gable ends, some 6/6, some 2/2, suggesting various dates for their construction.

The first alteration to the house appears to have affected the rear section. About half of the rear section is an addition: there is a clearly defined cleavage line from the ground to the roof, and the front half of the house from the ground to the top of the first story--except for the facade--is stuccoed fieldstone rather than brick. There is no basement under this section of the house. It is possible that the rear section, rather than an entirely new addition, may have been a replacement for a frame original, since the catslide roofline and overall proportions of the house suggest this section of the house was original in some form.

Further alterations occurred during the late nineteenth century when the house became a double-dwelling and was given a mild Greek Revival face-lifting, probably during the ownership of William Vannort, who appears to have had classical trim put on most of the many houses he owned. The outside bays were turned into entrances with flat roof, squared-columned porticos with balustered railings; and the original entrance was replace by a window. The fascia board may have been a part of this alteration also. (The house remained double until the mid-1960's when the present owners converted it back into its original arrangement.) The last alteration occurred in the 1940's or 1950's when a 1-story "A" roof frame addition was put on the rear.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

K-27

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1735-1750 BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This is one of two brick Georgian "original catslide" houses in Chestertown. It makes an interesting comparison with the other, 400-402 Cannon Street, which was built around the same time. The Cannon Street house maintains a symmetrical gable roof by changing the pitch of the slide; 103 Queen Street maintains a constant pitch from break to the rear of the slide, sacrificing the symmetrical gable.

It is a pity Vannort had 103 Queen and 107 Queen, 103's neighbors on either side, built so close that the distinctive shape of 103 is visible only from the rear.

The house was presumably built for John Buck, an Englishman, who bought the land from Jonothon Page, mariner, in 1735 for £25. Buck bought the northern half of Town Lot 34, which had some sort of modest "messuage or tenement" (probably frame) already on it. Buck died in 1750 and left the property--probably 103 Queen and quite possibly 116 High Street on the corner as well--to his sons, William and George. If John Buck did not have 116 built then his sons assuredly did. They sold Emory Sudler the property with "two brick messuages or tenements" on it for £700 (pre Revolution pounds) in 1771 and returned to England.

K-27

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3626 square feet

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Beginning at an iron pipe on the southeasterly side of Queen Street; said pipe being the northeast corner of the herin described lands and the northwest corner of the lands of L.S. Gwyn; and running thence south 45 degrees, 38 minutes East, 98 feet to an iron pipe and the lands of P.F. Tapke; thence by and with said Tapke lands South 44 degrees, 7 minutes West 37 feet to an iron pipe; thence north 46 degrees 36 minutes West by and with the lands of W.M. Reed 98 feet to the southeasterly ~~xxx~~ side of Queen Street.; thence north with Queen Street 37 feet to the place of beginning.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	COUNTY
STATE	COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Robert Neill Historic Site Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust / Town of Chestertown

DATE

April, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

Title Search on 103 Queen Street

Jonothon Page to John Buck, Esq. Liber 4 Folio 542 (1735) L25
(northwest half of Town Lot 34...tenement or messuage)

John Buck wills property to his sons, George and William (1750)

William and George Buck to Emory Sudler DD 3 513 (1771) L700
(northwest half of Town Lot 34...two brick messuages or tenements)

Emory Sudler to Thomas Smyth EF 6 487 (1785) L2998
(Northwest half of Town Lot 34--except small piece sold to T.S.Jr.--and a large portion of Town Lot 25 purchased previously from G.W. Forrester)

Thomas Smyth to Benjamin Chambers EF 7 77 (1786) L650
(103 Queen and portion of Lot 25 that now has 101, 107, and 109 Queen on it)

Benjamin Chambers to Augusta (Chambers) Houston BC 7 49 (1811)
(109 Queen property deeded to his son, Ezekial)
Augusta Houston leaves property to her daughter, Elizabeth (Houston) Patton.

Elizabeth Patton to J. Houston Eccleston JKH 3 161 (1862) \$1000
(sister's son ?)

J. Houston Eccleston to William Vannort JKH 7 340 (1868) \$1600
(Vannort has 101 and 107 built)

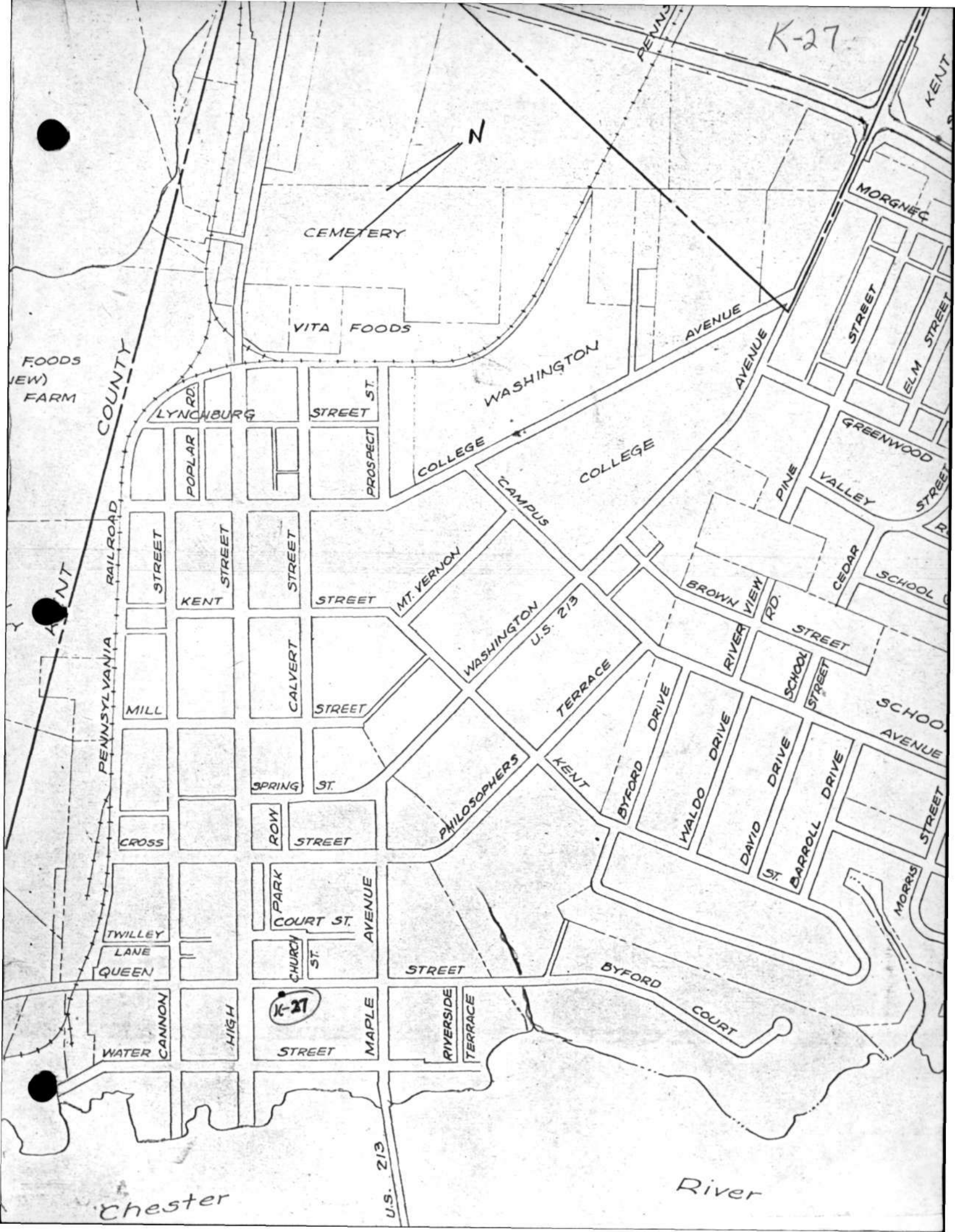
William Vannort leaves property to Mary A.H. Simpers.

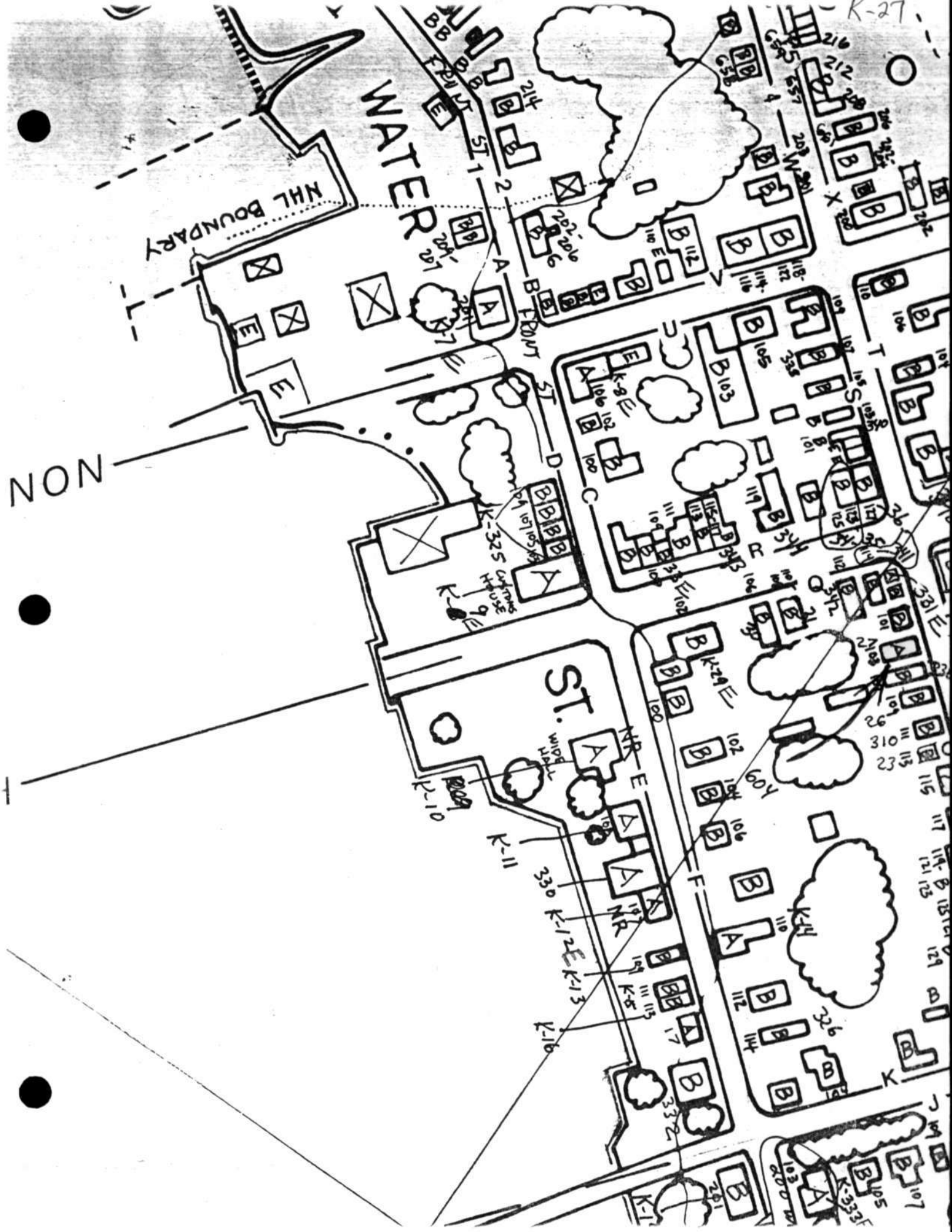
Property descends to J. Raymond Simpers.

Property descends to heirs of J.R. Simpers (Nuttles, Simperses, Vannorts, Chapmans, and Joneses) who sell piece with 103 Queen on it to John Allspach

WHG 52 447 (1957)

John and Anna Allspach to Norman and Alice James EHP 1 312 (1963)





K-27
Buck-Chambers House (John Buck House)
103 Queen St.
Chestertown
Chestertown Quad.
Kent County



any idea of #s for houses here?

Chestertown



N.E.

direction

N. QUEEN STREET, CHESTERTOWN, MD.

107 N. Queen St. K-338

109 N. Queen St. K-26

111 N. Queen St. - K-310

101 N. Queen St. K-340

103 N. Queen St. K-27

113 N. Queen St. - K 23



K 27 John Buck House
103 Queen St

1/77 W



~~31-32~~

Chillicothe Ind.

103 Quail John Buck House
w view taken from SW

K-27

²

K-101

52